

In Memoriam

Abbott McConnell Washburn

[April 25, 1887 - September 10, 1939]



**Hennepin County Bar Association
District Court
Fourth Judicial District
Minneapolis, Minnesota
1940**

Abbott McConnell Washburn

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Abbott McConnell Washburn, known to his intimates as “Mac” Washburn, was born at Mankato, Minnesota, April 25, 1887. His parents were Jed L. Washburn and Elma Pattee Washburn. Shortly after his birth his parents moved to Duluth, where his father became one of the leading lawyers of that city and senior member of the firm of Washburn, Bailey & Mitchell.

Mr. Washburn graduated from Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts, and Harvard University from which latter institution he received his A. B. degree in 1908. He then attended the Law School at the University of Minnesota, from which institution he received his LL.B. degree in 1911. He immediately entered his father’s office and began the practice of law in Duluth and subsequently became a member of his father’s firm.

In 1930 he moved from Duluth to Minneapolis at which time he became Vice President and General Counsel of First National Bank in Minneapolis and First Bank Stock Corporation and occupied those positions until his death on September 10, 1939.

About a year after beginning the practice of law, he married Ruby Leslie Friske of St. Paul. They had one son, Abbott, Jr. Mr. Washburn was survived by his widow, his son, his mother, his brother John L. Washburn, and three sisters, Mrs. C. R. McLean and Genevieve and Hope Washburn.

When this country entered the World War, Mr. Washburn entered the service and became captain of Company L, 66th Division, 351st Infantry. He participated in active service in the front-line trenches in October, 1918. He was honorably discharged from military service on June 7, 1919.

“Mac” Washburn was a very unusual man. His outstanding characteristic was his keen, receptive, quick mind. He could analyze a legal problem in less time than any lawyer I ever

knew, quickly winnowing the grain from the chaff and finding the particular kernel in which the germ of the problem existed. When meeting him, one was impressed by the way in which he rapidly expressed his views in an explosive, staccato form peculiar to him. Through all that he said shone his kindly nature, sympathetic to the problem on which he was in contact. He was not one who “wore his heart upon his sleeve.” He was blessed with a generous nature and a deep sense of loyalty. He gave an attentive ear to the problems of his associates, employees of the bank, and his relatives, and gave liberally of his time for their benefit. He had a large group of intimate friends among leading men of all ages in this community. He had a very wide range of acquaintances among lawyers and bankers of the state and nation and for many years prior to his death occupied an enviable standing at the bar and in banking circles.

Few, if any, who knew him, knew of his philosophic turn of mind and all were surprised to find at his death that he left behind him certain poems which illustrated in part his philosophy. I wish the time at my disposal would permit me to read several of them, but, knowing that my time is very brief, I have selected brief excerpts from two of them. One was entitled “On Minnetonka’s Shore” and in it he said:

..... yet are we armed with added hope,
The weapon that enables us to cope
With all our enemies, however great,
For striving lends to strength a larger scope,
Which naught may master, nor may aught abate,
And courage fast on high the master is of fate.

The knight who never yet has known defeat,
But the victor is with ease in every fight,
Is counted brave, but let him chance to meet
Foul faced adversity, whose treacherous blight
Withers the stoutest arm, then truly might
We test the worth and temper of his heart,
And if he shrink not from that gruesome sight,

**But nobly striving, nobly bears his part,
Then count him brave indeed, nor bravery's counterpart.**

**So may we greet the struggles of each day
With courage high, intent to do our will,
Now seeing victory bright, now failure gray,
Now conquering, now conquered, but still
Forever striving fearlessly until
The day is done, nor any battle more
Commands our arms, nor any task our skill,
And homeward leads the welcome road before
To rest and peace and hope, upon some distant shore.**

Another was inspired by its observation of a clipper ship on a vacation trip and in that poem he said:

**Soaring bird, so strong and bright,
Winging over land and sea,
Sweeping on in glorious flight,
Grace in every line of thee,—
Take me up and let me view
Visions over fresh and new.**

**Hand of man is never wrought
Beauty half so rare as thine,
Brain of man was never taught
Dream of conquest so divine.
Jove's own miracle art thou,
Sprung, like Pallas, from his brow.**

**When I mark thee in the sky,
Flashing like some jewel fair,
Angels beckoning on high
Draw my spirit through the air,
Side by side to fly with thee,
Deathless through eternity.**

Mr. Washburn was a man who was greatly respected and admired by those who know him. May the record of his

successful life live long to guide and encourage others in the profession.

Respectfully submitted,
Clark A. Fletcher

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The photograph on the first page is from *Men of Minnesota* (1915).

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